

# Angela Merkel stands by her 2015 decision to open German borders

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday stood by her decision to open Germany's borders to hundreds of thousands of refugees two years ago.

She has previously defended the move as a necessary response to a humanitarian emergency.

Asked during a pre-election television event with voters whether she would do things differently if faced with the same situation, Mrs Merkel said, in retrospect "I still think my decision was right".

She added that her government had taken numerous steps to ensure the crisis is not repeated.

The influx of almost a million refugees to Germany in 2015 prompted sharp criticism of Mrs Merkel from some politicians on the right, including her conservative allies in Bavaria.

But Horst Seehofer, who leads the Bavarian sister party of Mrs Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, appeared to back away Sunday from his long-standing call for a cap on refugees.

Mr Seehofer previously demanded an upper limit of 200,000 refugees per year.

"The situation has changed, Berlin has changed course," Mr Seehofer told public broadcaster ARD.

"We now have significantly less immigration than at the time when I made those comments."

He was responding to a question about whether his Christian Social Union party would sign a new governing coalition agreement with Mrs Merkel's party without a firm assurance that there would be a maximum number of refugees allowed in Germany.

Mrs Merkel has rejected such a cap.

Mr Seehofer said he would aim to ensure the measures already taken to reduce refugee arrivals are protected by a future government after the September 24 election.

Mrs Merkel told private German broadcaster RTL on Sunday that she would run for a full four-year term if she is re-elected next month.

Asked whether she would stand for election again in 2021, the 63-year-old chancellor said: "That will be discussed again at the appropriate time."

She repeatedly used the same phrase before committing herself to run in this year's election.

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